

# **DRAFT MINUTES**

## **TALBOT COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MONTHLY MEETING**

**August 3, 2015**

### **I. ROLL CALL**

The regular monthly meeting of the Talbot County Historic Preservation Commission was called to order at 3:05 PM on Monday, August 3rd, 2015. Those members in attendance were Mr. Ward Bucher, Chair; Mrs. Marsha Kacher, Ms. Cynthia Schmidt, Mr. Robert Amdur, Mr. Ronald Mitchell, Mr. Robert Mueller, and Dr. Dorothy Fenwick. Representing the County was Mr. Jeremy Rothwell. Also present was Mr. Phillip Logan.

### **II. CURRENT BUSINESS**

- A. REVIEW MINUTES OF THE July 6th, 2015 MEETING - The minutes of the meeting on July 6th were reviewed. Ms. Marsha Kacher moved to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ronald Mitchell and unanimously carried. Mr. Ward Bucher requested that staff put on the agenda in September for the selection of a vice-chair who would lead the meeting in his absence.
- B. UPDATE ON THE SURVEY OF EASTERN VILLAGES – Mr. Jeremy Rothwell gave a brief update on the project. Specifically, he noted that he spoke with Ms. Elizabeth Beckley this morning, who told him that she was making progress on the village survey. Mr. Rothwell relayed from Ms. Beckley that she would likely be complete the survey of fourteen public and commercial buildings by September. Mr. Rothwell stated that he will contact Ms. Beckley, and arrange for her to give a brief presentation at the September HPC Meeting. Mr. Ronald Mitchell suggested that Ms. Beckley make a public presentation of her findings and documentation work to the Talbot County Council, or some other public venue perhaps in October. Mr. Ward Bucher requested that the TCHPC discuss this idea further at the September HPC meeting.
- C. UPDATE ON THE MILLER'S HOUSE HISTORIC OVERLAY DISTRICT – Mr. Jeremy Rothwell passed out copies of the staff report he drafted for the upcoming Planning Commission Meeting on Wednesday, August 5<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 am. At this meeting, the Planning Commission will make a formal recommendation to the County Council as to whether the Miller's House is an appropriate historic overlay district. Mr. Rothwell noted that he would be making a formal presentation on behalf the Department of Planning and Zoning, but invited representatives of the TCHPC to give public testimony as well on the project. Lastly, Mr. Rothwell explained that the County Council recently approved the request by the TCHPC to waive the \$500 application fee for the zoning map amendment.
- D. MHT CULTURAL RESOURCES HAZARD MITIGATION GRANT – Mr. Jeremy Rothwell gave a brief presentation on the project, and passed out maps of the western water-oriented villages. Mr. Rothwell explained that Mr. Mark Cahoon, Talbot County GIS Coordinator, used data from the State Department of Assessments and Taxation to identify those dwellings and structures that were constructed prior to 1950. Mr. Cohoon

then overlaid this with the 100-year floodplain, and those structures (highlighted in yellow), which had already been documented through MIHP. Mr. Rothwell explained that in consultation with Mr. Jim Bass, Emergency Management Planner, and Mary Kay Verdery, Planning Director, that the Villages of Tilghman and Newcomb/Royal Oak were in the opinion of staff most threatened by flooding, and in the most need for documentation. Mr. Ronald Mitchell recommended that Neavitt be included instead of Newcomb/Royal Oak in the grant application since it seems to have more historic structures in the flood zone. Mr. Ward Bucher recommended expanding the list of structures to be documented to include those within the 500-year floodplain as well as the 100-year flood plain. Ms. Cynthia Schmidt recommended considering the extent of shoreline erosion in past decades in selecting villages to be documented. Mr. Jeremy Rothwell noted that those villages like Tilghman, which front the Chesapeake Bay or are the mouth of its major tributaries are most susceptible to shoreline erosion. Mr. Ronald Mitchell makes a motion to support the grant application, having staff draft up a formal application to document those historic structures within the 500-year floodplain in the Villages of Tilghman (primary), Neavitt (secondary), Newcomb/Royal Oak (secondary). The motion was seconded by Ms. Dorothy Fenwick, and unanimously approved (7-0) by the TCHPC. Mr. Jeremy Rothwell stated that he will start the formal application process, and give an update at the September HPC meeting.

- E. BILL 1305 PRD LEGISLATION UPDATE - Mr. Jeremy Rothwell gave a brief update on the project. He noted that the County Council has not as of yet decided how best to amend the current bill, or to draft a new bill. Regardless, any new bill or (bill amendment) would have to go back to the Planning Commission for a formal recommendation.
- F. REAPPOINTMENT TO TCHPC – Mr. Jeremy Rothwell noted that the County Council recently reappointed Ms. Dorothy Fenwick to the TCHPC, thus filling all open positions on the Commission.
- G. CLAY’S HOPE SIX-TO-FIX GRANT APPLICATION – As requested, Mr. Jeremy Rothwell reported that he worked with the owner of Clay’s Hope, Mr. Christian Berg, and submitted a formal application to Preservation Maryland for the documentation and restoration of the Clay’s Hope tobacco barn. Additionally, Mr. Rothwell explained that he spoke with Ms. Margaret DeArcangelis from Preservation Maryland, who explained that grant recipients would not be announced until sometime in mid-September.
- H. RICH NECK MANOR (T-211) SITE VISIT – Mr. Robert Amdur noted that a contingent of TCHPC members conducted a site visit to Rich Neck Manor on July 13<sup>th</sup>. He also explained that he has not scheduled a site visit for the month of August. Ms. Dorothy Fenwick requested that we put site visits on as a discussion item for the September meeting given that our recent guest speaker from the University of Maryland stated that we should not be going out as a full contingent on site visits. Mr. Ward Bucher also requested that we put on the agenda for September a discussion item on whether the actual meeting date for the TCHPC should be moved to avoid conflicts with the Talbot County Council and Historic Easton, Inc.

### III. NEW BUSINESS

- A. WYE HOUSE FARM (T-54) TENANT HOUSE ADDITION – Mr. Jeremy Rothwell gave a brief overview of the applicants' request. Specifically, Mr. Rothwell explained that the applicants, William and Lee Gordon, nephew of Mr. Richard Tilghman, currently reside in a dwelling known as the "Wye River House" which is within the 100 ft. Shoreline Development Buffer on the Wye House Farm (T-54). The 146-acre property is entirely within a historic overlay district and a Maryland Environmental Trust (MET) easement, while the Wye House itself and surrounding outbuildings are listed as a National Register Landmark District. The subject dwelling, is one of five on the property, and is non-conforming by the standards set forth in the Talbot County Zoning Ordinance. Mr. Rothwell noted that pending a decision from the Critical Area Commission and the Talbot County Planning Director, the applicants would be required to obtain either an administrative variance from the Planning Director, a full variance from the Board of Appeals. Since the applicants require a variance(s), Mr. Rothwell recommended that they come before the TCHPC as a discussion item, so that the applicants can gain feedback and consensus before making formal applications for a variance. Mr. Phillip Logan, the applicants' agent and architect, gave a brief overview of the proposed addition and improvements, and passed out an informational packet outlining said improvements. Specifically, he explained that the "Wye River House" was constructed sometime in the early 1950's as a tenant house for the farm manager. As shown in the attachments, the applicants wish to construct a two-story 560 sq. ft. addition on the landward, western face of the dwelling, a covered porch on the east and west faces of the dwelling, and an open porch on the south face of the dwelling. As required by the terms of the MET easement, the proposed two-story addition would not increase the gross-floor area (GFA) of the existing dwelling by more than 20%. Mr. Ward Bucher noted that all four facades of the existing dwelling would be altered through these proposed improvements, and also questioned the applicants' assumption that the dwelling was constructed in the 1950s. Ms. Cynthia Schmidt stated that from the exterior photographs provided in the packet, that the subject dwelling could have been constructed as early as 1850 to 1870. She explained that the design and orientation of the dwelling is very similar to other farm tenant houses from this period in the county. Ms. Dorothy Fenwick stated that in her opinion, it looked as though the dwelling has already been substantially altered through various additions and façade improvements. Mr. Ronald Mitchell questioned Mr. Logan as to how the subject dwelling and proposed improvements would relate to the entire plantation complex? Mr. Mitchell quoted from the National Register nomination that the Wye House Farm represents one of the finest examples and compilations of eighteenth to early twentieth century farm complexes. Mr. Logan stated that the existing outbuildings and tenant houses are each different, and from varying time periods, and thus do not directly relate to one another. However, Mr. Logan stated that most of the outbuildings have been painted yellow and white, while the tenant houses are each their own color and style. Ms. Marsha Kacher recommended that the TCHPC conduct a site visit to the property to gain a better understanding of the context of the existing dwelling and proposed improvements. Mr. Jeremy Rothwell explained that he has already coordinated with the Critical Area Commission to conduct a site visit on Monday, August 17<sup>th</sup>, so it may be possible for the TCHPC to visit the property afterwards. Mr. Rothwell stated that he would send out an email in the next week to gauge everyone's preference and availability to do a site visit. Mr. Rothwell also noted that he would place the project back on the September HPC agenda as a discussion item to give further direction and guidance to the applicants.

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting will be on Monday, September 8th 2015 at 3:00 pm in Conference Room One of the Talbot County Office Building at 215 Bay Street in Easton.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 4:10 pm.